



South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

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EVENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC

I. COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Governor McMaster announced last week that vaccine distribution Phase 1.b. will open on March 8th. In addition to all adults age 55 and over, Phase 1.b. includes all South Carolinians with developmental disabilities or other high risk disabilities. Those individuals can make appointments via the DHEC Vax Locator website [here](#).

Johnson and Johnson (J&J) Vaccine - The first shipment of the Johnson and Johnson one dose vaccine has arrived in South Carolina. This will greatly enhance the efforts to get everyone immunized in SC and make appointments more available for individuals in Phases 1.a and 1.b.

President Biden has announced that the federal government has arranged for a supply of vaccine to vaccinate every eligible American and it will be available by the end of May.

II. CDC RELEASES INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS

The CDC has issued its first set of guidance for individuals who are fully vaccinated (two weeks after a second Pfizer or Moderna dose or first dose of J&J vaccine.) This guidance will be updated as the fully vaccinated population grows. The new guidance relaxes restrictions on visitation and quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated individuals. Precautions such as mask wearing, physical distancing, and avoiding large crowds remain in place as guidance. The new guidance can be found [here](#).

III. PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING COVID-19 VACCINES

The SC Developmental Disabilities Council and Able South Carolina have produced a new guide that will help all South Carolinians understand the COVID-19 vaccine and how to access COVID-19 vaccines. You can find the plain language guide [here](#).

IV. SC DOT ANNOUNCES TRANSPORTATION GRANT PROGRAMS

The SC Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced two transportation grant programs available to agencies that serve seniors and those with disabilities. The first grant program is part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Act passed in December. It funds transportation costs including operator salaries, fuel, and insurance. The deadline for that grant is March 29th. That announcement can be found [here](#). The second announcement is for a state FY 2020-2021 grant to purchase an ADA vehicle to transport seniors or individuals with disabilities. The deadline for this grant is April 15th. That announcement can be found [here](#).

V. DHEC UPDATES VISITATION GUIDELINES FOR LTC FACILITIES

Governor McMaster and DHEC Director Ed Simmer have announced updated guidance for Community Residential Care Facilities in South Carolina. They pointed out that 40 counties in SC are now under the ten percent COVID-19 positive rate. For facilities in those 40 counties, if they are not currently under COVID-19 quarantine and maintain the CMS core principles of infection control, then visitation should be allowed at the facilities. Please find the announcement [here](#).

VI. DHEC REQUESTS ALL CLOSED POD PARTNERS UPDATE THEIR INFORMATION

DHEC is asking all partners registered as Closed Points of Dispensing (POD) for Medical Countermeasures to update their contact information. Please contact your regional Medical Counter Measures Coordinator to update your information. If you do not know your MCM point of contact, or you would like more information on how your agency can become a closed POD, contact your regional Health Care Preparedness Coalition, the contact information for each region is provided on the DHEC web site [here](#).

VII. DHEC FLU WATCH UPDATE

Reported cases of influenza continue to be low and decreasing statewide. There was a slight increase in flu activity in the Pee Dee region. To date there have been 13 flu related deaths reported statewide. The infection control measures being taken to combat COVID-19 appear to have dramatically curtailed the spread of influenza in the state. You can view the most recent Flu Watch surveillance report from DHEC [here](#).

VIII. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH NEWSLETTER ON COVID-19

The NIH has devoted its March newsletter, [News in Health](#) to better understanding COVID-19. Other topics include “Chronic Disease in a Pandemic,” “How long does COVID-19 Immunity Last?”, and a Q and A on Super-spreading COVID-19. You can find a link to the newsletter [here](#).

IX. PROJECT FIRSTLINE UPDATE

Project First Line (PFL) is a collaborative effort with DHEC and the CDC to provide frontline healthcare workers with the infection control training needed to protect them and their patients from infectious disease threats.

New videos and trainings are being produced now to target infection control training for frontline staff over a variety of specific job functions in the DDSN provider network. The videos are being developed based on the results of our recently completed Project Firstline survey. It is our hope that you will be able to share these videos with your staff to raise their basic proficiency and knowledge of infection and source control. To get started, a set of basic infection control training videos can be found [here](#).

X. CONGRESS PASSES STIMULUS BILL

The American Rescue Act passed the House of Representatives on Wednesday. The legislation now goes to President Biden to be signed on Friday. The Act is aimed at assisting individuals and government agencies to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. More information on the effect of the Act will be forthcoming.